Reviewer’s report

Title: Hope against hope: Exploring the hopes and challenges of rural female caregivers of persons with advanced cancer

Version: 4 Date: 31 August 2013

Reviewer: Laura Funk

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the resubmitted manuscript and response to previous comments. Though revisions have been made to many of my concerns, I have the following remaining minor essential revisions.

I would suggest going through the document with a careful reading one more time for typos. For instance, offhand I found the following (and I wasn’t specifically looking for them):

Page 4, when mentioning the mixed method study from which these data originated – it states this was a ‘current, explanatory design’ – I think this is a typo, and should read “concurrent explanatory”? This is based on my understanding of Cresswell’s terminology.

pp.11-12: “For each of the narrative categories, with direct quotes from the data from the journals are given” (I think you want to remove ‘with’?).

p.12 “JE began the initial analysis and then meet several times to discuss the analysis...” (also, to clarify, perhaps you mean “and then met with AW and WD several times to discuss the analysis”?

p.14, “anything else but pus inot it”

Final paragraph before the methods section. The sentence “with only three published study of caregivers of persons with advanced cancer, there is a paucity of research in this area.” As well as the typo (change study to studies) I think the sentence should read: “With only three published studies of hope among caregivers of persons with advanced cancer, there is a paucity of research in this area.”

Please state somewhere in the article that your approach to the collection and interpretation of the qualitative data is positivist or objectivist. My understanding of narrative methodology is that it is normally based on a constructivist paradigm (note - the term is not constructiveness, but constructivist or constructionist, or sometimes the term interpretive is used). The clarification that the particular narrative approach used here is objectivist or positivist would help alleviate misunderstandings. As an aside, I still recommend that the authors should consider, albeit in a separate publication (discretionary), a more constructionist analysis of the findings (I concede that to introduce it here would not maintain the existing study integrity in terms of stated purpose etc.).
**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'